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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire was sent to 97 Indiana University School of Education students who had participated in the Block Program during 1980 to 1982 to ascertain their employment situations. The Block Program option, for junior or senior year students, is characterized by: (1) team instruction and program flexibility; (2) articulated study in program areas; (3) articulated collegiate and field experiences; and (4) extensive evaluation during the program. The primary focus of the study was on graduates who were seeking teaching positions. One limitation was that not all the participants had graduated in the expected four years; twenty-four percent of the graduates took over four years to complete their degree, compared to ten percent of the graduates in previous years. The percentage of qualified graduates who did not look for teaching positions was 31, also a high figure compared to previous years. Of the 46 graduates who were seeking fulltime teaching positions, 83 percent were successful. Another 13 percent found other fulltime jobs. A new teacher education program has been designed for the school of education, incorporating many of the features of the Block Program. (FG)

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1981 GRADUATES OF THE BLOCK PROGRAM

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

At the time of their matriculation, the Block Program was one of two major options available to students preparing to become elementary teachers. The other program was entitled The Campus-Based Program. The Block Program was a special professional semester offered for students in their second semester of the Junior Year or first semester of the Senior Year. The following characteristics were associated with this option: (1) team approach to instruction; (2) flexibility of program; (3) carefully articulated work with respect to preparation in Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading, and Social Studies; (4) carefully articulated collegiate and field experiences in the schools (one-half day or one full day per week):* and (5) extensive evaluation of each phase of the program including Follow-Up studies. As a rule, all students were required to sign up for 16-17 semester hours which then ensured maximum flexibility in program planning. It was possible, however, for portions of the program to be waived as was true for those students who took math methods during their sophomore year (special project). On other occasions, students were permitted to participate in the program over two semesters because of unusual personal circumstances. About ninety percent of the students took the full complement of hours in one semester.

Following the Block Semester, students had several different Student Teaching Options which they could exercise. Such choices were open to all students in the Block and the Campus-Based Programs. (See Diagram 1.)

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*This field experience lasted for fourteen weeks. During the last two weeks of each semester, students and faculty worked full-time in the public schools.

OPTIONS FOR ELEMENTARY MAJORS

Campus-Based **Block Program**

(Programs of Preparation for the generalist--K-6 teachers/no particular reference to age, grade level, or background of students to be taught.)

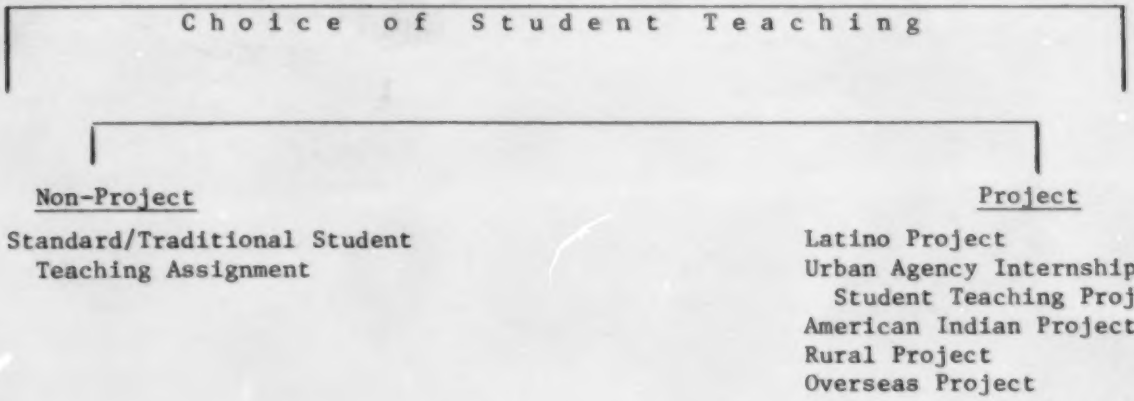

DIAGRAM 1

When students have choices, they often raise questions about various programs. Answers to most of these questions have been readily available: Who teaches in the program? When and how are courses scheduled? How does one gain admission? What kinds of field experiences are provided? How will students be evaluated? Are there specific requirements? What are the unique features of this program? Etc. Prior to 1976, however, we were not able to answer THE QUESTION: What happens to those participants who complete your program and graduate--Do they get jobs? One purpose of this study then was to continue studies begun several years ago and, thus, be able to provide up-to-date information relative to this question.

Part I Procedures

A questionnaire was designed and distributed to faculty associated with the Block Program. This group consisted of senior faculty and associate instructors. These people met weekly for purposes of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Their reactions provided the major input for questionnaire modification.

Questionnaires were sent out initially in late January, 1982. Enclosed with each questionnaire was a self-addressed/postage paid envelope. Before the first questionnaires were sent out, however, a check was made with our records department (School of Education), as well as other sources (Placement Bureau, Alumni Office), in an attempt to verify permanent address data as well as information on graduation. Students in the Block Program in the spring and fall of 1980 were expected to graduate in January, May, or August of 1981.

In early March, follow-up questionnaires were sent out to all non-respondents. On March 19, 1982, we closed this phase of our search.

Telephone contact was then made in late March/early April with non-respondents who had not been accounted for using the above procedures. Often, telephone communication was with a parent rather than the student directly. This activity then represented our final attempt to identify the whereabouts and present activities of our former students.

Part II The Findings

Our primary concern related to those students who were actually seeking teaching positions. Of course, not all were ready to move into the market place. Some simply did not graduate on the normal four-year student calendar assumed. And others, who did complete their degrees and thus qualify for a teaching certificate, did not choose to move directly into their chosen profession upon graduation. Table 1 provides an overview of what happened to the 1980 participants in the Block Program.

Table I

1980 PARTICIPANTS IN THE BLOCK PROGRAM*

	Number	Percentage
1980 Block Participants	97	100
1980 Graduates	74	76
Did not Graduate by September 1, 1981	23**	24
Graduated/Qualified for Teaching	74	100
Available for Placement (Looking)	46	62
Not Available (Not Looking)	23	31
Unable to Locate	5	7
Available for Placement	46	100
Found/Offered Teaching Positions	38	83
Found Related Positions	6	13
Did Not Find Teaching or Related Positions	2	4
Not Available for Placement	23	100
Other Employment Opportunities	4	17
Graduate School	5	22
Other	14	61

*This model for reporting manpower data is the same one used by the Federal Government. See Summary Data: Vocation Education. Fiscal Year 1974 published by U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare/Office of Education/Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education/Office of Adult, Vocation, Technical, and Manpower Education/Division of Vocational and Technical Education.

**11 graduated January 1982
1 dropped out of school--illness
11 still in school (most eill graduate May, 1982)

These students were in The Block Program at one of two times: (1) Spring Semester 1979-80; or (2) Fall Semester 1980-81. Assuming a normal matriculation pattern, one would have expected all students to graduate in 1981 (January, May, or August). As has been true for several years, many students obviously do not follow this pattern. However, the numbers changed markedly in the present study. Since 1976, when we first began our studies, the percentage in this category has consistently been around 10%. This

year the figure was 24%! Of the twenty-three students represented in this category, eleven graduated in January of 1982. Only one dropped out of school and that was because of illness. The other students should graduate this May.

Regarding the five students not located, none of them had registered with the Placement Bureau. We have no idea what happened to any of them. This figure has remained fairly constant over the years.

Another startling surprise in this year's study had to do with the number of students who graduated--and thus were qualified to teach--and then appeared in the Not Looking category. Almost one third of our students (23) chose not to look for a teaching position upon graduation. Of this number, five went directly into graduate school and four found employment in fields more attractive to them. Two others were pregnant and three were not searching for a position because of recent marriages and the uncertainty of future location. In each case, the husbands were in the process of finding positions and/or graduating in the middle of the year. Two others chose to travel in Europe following graduation.

With the exception of the students in graduate school and those who were pregnant, all of the persons in the Not Looking category had found full time employment by the spring of 1982. Three were in management training programs, one was a traveling consultant for her sorority and two others were sales representatives (telephone company, a pharmaceutical house). Still another was in a special Legal Secretary Training Program. Other students had more routine kinds of positions. Some of these jobs did not require a university degree, i.e., janitorial work, receptionist.

Those Seeking Teaching Positions. Of the 46 students who were seeking full-time teaching positions, 83 percent were successful and thirteen percent more were able to find related positions--these are positions which require a degree, one where preparation as an elementary major was critical to employment. In most instances, persons in this latter group were serving as substitute teachers, some on permanent contract. One student had a naturalist's position serving as an Outdoor Education Coordinator. All told, 96 percent, of those seeking jobs, found full-time teaching positions or related positions. Regarding two students who were not successful in finding teaching/related positions, both found other employment. Our 1981 class is teaching in nine different states and the District of Columbia. The states are Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Texas. The most interesting position was held by the teacher working out of Washington, D.C. As a member of the President's Classroom for Young Americans, she travels all over the United States teaching high school students.

Part III Conclusions

Participants in the Block Program, who move on to complete their degree requirements and then move actively into the job market seeking full-time positions, are successful in achieving this objective. Of those seeking full-time teaching positions, 83 percent found them. When considering teaching and other related positions, the figure rose to 96 percent. These figures are similar to those obtained in past studies.

Most of our students continue to assume positions in public schools. While most locate in Indiana, many locate out-of-state.

As noted previously, there were two very surprising statistics which appeared in this year's study. One had to do with students who did not complete their programs in four years and the other with those who had graduated but were not looking for a position. It is too early to tell if these situations will develop into a pattern. Should this happen, then it might be necessary to develop a study to generate more data about such situations.

A Final Word

This study will be the last conducted by this investigator. As Co-Director of The Block Program for the last several years, it has been an interesting and rewarding experience to conduct these follow-up studies. With the new Teacher Education Program now on line, we will now have one program for all of our students. However, choices will continue to be offered during the Student Teaching Semester.

The new Teacher Education Program developed under Rules 46-47 will incorporate many of the features of The Block Program. Most notable will be the emphasis on continuous field experience. Such work in the schools will be carefully articulated with collegiate classwork.